

# PRELIMINARY REPORT

## 2015: H1-H8 – *Inner West Loop*

**APPLICANT:** City of Houston Planning & Development

**KEY MAP:** 491, 492, 493

**JURISDICTION:** City of Houston

**LAMBERT:** 5256-5258, 5356-5358,  
**DISTRICT/PRECINCT:** City Council: G C H  
Harris County Pct.: 1, 4

### PROPOSAL:

The City of Houston Planning & Development Department (P&D) is requesting the reclassification of the below Thoroughfares and Collectors within the Inner West Loop (IWL) Mobility Study. Details on the requests are provided following the background information on the mobility study.

	ID	STREET NAME	STREET SEGMENT	AMENDMENT REQUEST
H	1.	Dunlavy Street	Richmond Avenue to Allen Parkway	Reclassify Dunlavy Street between Richmond Avenue and Allen Parkway from a 4 lane Major Collector (MJ-4-60) to 2 lane Major Collector (MJ-2-60)
	2.	Sawyer Street	Crockett Street to Washington Avenue	Reclassify Sawyer Street between Crockett Street and Washington Avenue from a 3 lane Major Collector (MJ-3-70) to a 2 lane Major Collector (MJ-2-70)
	3.	Shepherd Drive	Dickson Street to IH 10	Reclassify Shepherd Drive between Dickson Street and IH 10 from a 60' right-of-way Principal Thoroughfare (P-4-60) to a 70' right-of-way Principal Thoroughfare (P-4-70)
	4.	Durham Drive	Dickson Street to Washington Avenue	Reclassify Durham Drive between Dickson Street and Washington Avenue from a 60' right-of-way Principal Thoroughfare (P-4-60) to a 70' right-of-way Principal Thoroughfare (P-4-70)
	5.	W. Alabama Street	Weslayan Street to Spur 527	Reclassify W. Alabama Street between Weslayan Street and Spur 527 from a 4 lane Major Collector (MJ-4-60) to a 2 lane Major Collector (MJ-2-60)

P&D also requests the addition of the following local streets to be classified as Minor Collectors as recommended by the IWL Mobility Study:

	ID	STREET NAME	STREET SEGMENT	AMENDMENT REQUEST
H	6.	Lovett Boulevard	Montrose Boulevard to Commonwealth Street	Add Lovett Boulevard between Montrose Boulevard and Commonwealth Street as a Minor Collector (MN-2-110)
	7.	Commonwealth Street	Lovett Boulevard to Westheimer Road	Add Commonwealth Street between Lovett Boulevard and Westheimer Road as a Minor Collector (MN-2-60)
	8.	Yoakum Boulevard	Westheimer Road to Richmond Avenue	Add Yoakum Boulevard between Westheimer Road and Richmond Avenue as a Minor Collector (MN-2-90)

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Inner West Loop Mobility Study, completed in 2013, represents the first sub-regional mobility study conducted by the City of Houston. This study was one of the recommendations from the City Mobility Planning (CMP) Phase I (See the appendix for more information). The study area is bounded on the east by Spur 527 and Bagby Street, on the west by IH 610 (West Loop), on the north by IH 10 (Katy Freeway), and on the south by US 59 (Southwest Freeway). The purpose was to determine appropriate mobility solutions that are needed in the near and long-term.

Most of the thoroughfares evaluated within the study have existed on the MTFP since its inception in 1942. With the introduction of the Inner Loop around Downtown, connectivity to the study area is limited by adjoining freeways; however, the urban street grid characteristic of the area has remained relatively intact. The Inner West Loop has grown tremendously over the past decades and this growth trend is expected to continue to 2035, according to the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC). Although, population density is projected to grow by more than 70%, the employment within the study area will more than double by 2035.

### Inner West Loop Population and Employment Projections

Year	Population	Population Density (Persons/Acre)	% Change	Jobs	Job Density (Jobs/Acre)	% Change
2010	85,035	9.8	-	130,755	15.1	-
2018	110,560	12.7	30.0%	179,355	20.7	37.2%
2035	147,002	16.9	33.0%	292,269	33.7	63.0%
<b>Change 2010 to 2035</b>	<b>61,967</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>72.9%</b>	<b>161,514</b>	<b>18.61</b>	<b>123.5%</b>

Source: Demographic Projections by H-GAC

One of the largest challenges within the study area is the fact that right-of-way (ROW) is significantly limited in many of the corridors due to existing development. Additionally, adding new street connections are not feasible due to the location of existing neighborhoods and given their residential street patterns and Buffalo and White Oak bayous crossing limitations. With the expected growth as demonstrated above, several of the corridors will continue to see increased congestion within the next 25 years. Despite the presence of a great street grid, the limited ROW and smaller block sizes and lot depths preclude several corridors from increasing their through-put capacity by simply widening the street to add travel lanes. The study recommended using a multi-modal and context sensitive approach and improving the efficiency of the overall public street network to address the demand on the transportation system. See the appendix for corridor specific recommendations from the Inner West Loop Mobility Study.

The Inner West Loop Mobility Study report can be found on the City's webpage:  
<http://houstontx.gov/planning/mobility/CMP/Inner-West-Loop-Mobility-Study>

Information about City Mobility Planning (CMP) can be found on the City's webpage:  
<http://houstontx.gov/planning/mobility/cmp>

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## AMENDMENT REQUEST:

Consistent with the recommendation from the Inner West Loop Mobility Study, 39 amendments were adopted by City Council in 2014. P&D has identified the following 8 amendments for consideration this year:

H-1. Dunlavy Street: Last year City Council/Administration requested Planning Commission to reconsider Dunlavy Street to ensure that the public is engaged on all alternatives being considered. Consistent with P&D's 2014 request and the updated MTFP Policy Statement clarifying the definition of number of lanes, P&D is requesting to reclassify Dunlavy Street between Richmond Avenue and Allen Parkway from a 4 lane Major Collector (MJ-4-60) to a 2 lane Major Collector (MJ-2-60).

H-2. Sawyer Street: In 2014 Planning Commission recommended the reclassification of Sawyer Street between Crockett Street and Washington Avenue from a 4 lane Major Collector (MJ-4-60) to a 2 lane Major Collector with a continuous center turn lane (MJ-3-70). The MTFP Policy Statement was updated in March 2015 to clarify that - *Vehicular through lanes, for purposes of the MTFP Street Hierarchy Classification Table, are lanes used for continuous travel throughout the entire length of the classified street segment. Lanes used for other purposes, such as turn lanes, parking lanes, bike lanes, etc., do not constitute vehicular through lanes.* Consistent with the updated MTFP Policy Statement, P&D is requesting to reclassify Sawyer Street between Crockett Street and Washington Avenue from a 2 lane with a continuous center turn lane Major Collector (MJ-3-70) to a 2 lane Major Collector (MJ-2-70).

H-3. Shepherd Drive: Shepherd Drive is classified as a 4 lane Principal Thoroughfare with a 60' ROW between Dickson Street and IH 10. The remainder of the segment to the north and south is classified as 70' ROW consistent with the multi-modal needs along the corridor. The Inner West Loop Mobility Study recommended the consideration of high frequency transit and improved pedestrian environment given the commercial – mixed-use nature of the corridor. Consistent with the remaining context of the corridor, P&D is requesting to reclassify Shepherd Drive between Dickson Street and IH 10 from a 60' right-of-way Principal Thoroughfare (P-4-60) to a 70' right-of-way Principal Thoroughfare (P-4-70).

H-4. Durham Drive: Durham Drive is classified as a 4 lane Principal Thoroughfare with a 60' ROW between Dickson Street and IH 10. The remainder of the segment to the north is classified as 70' ROW consistent with the multi-modal needs along the corridor. As with Shepherd Drive, the Inner West Loop Mobility Study recommended the consideration of high frequency transit and improved pedestrian environment given the commercial – mixed-use nature of the corridor. Consistent with the remaining context of the corridor, P&D is requesting to reclassify Durham Drive between Dickson Street and IH 10 from a 60' right-of-way Principal Thoroughfare (P-4-60) to a 70' right-of-way Principal Thoroughfare (P-4-70).

H-5. W. Alabama Street: W. Alabama Street is classified as a 4 lane Major Collector (MJ-4-60). The existing condition east of Shepherd Drive is 2 lanes with a continuous center turn lane. The section west of Shepherd Drive has 2 lanes west bound, 1 lane east bound and a continuous center turn lane. The Inner West Loop Mobility Study recommended the consideration of bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the corridor given the mixed-use land use context along the corridor. Given the limited ROW along the corridor and development in proximity of the street,

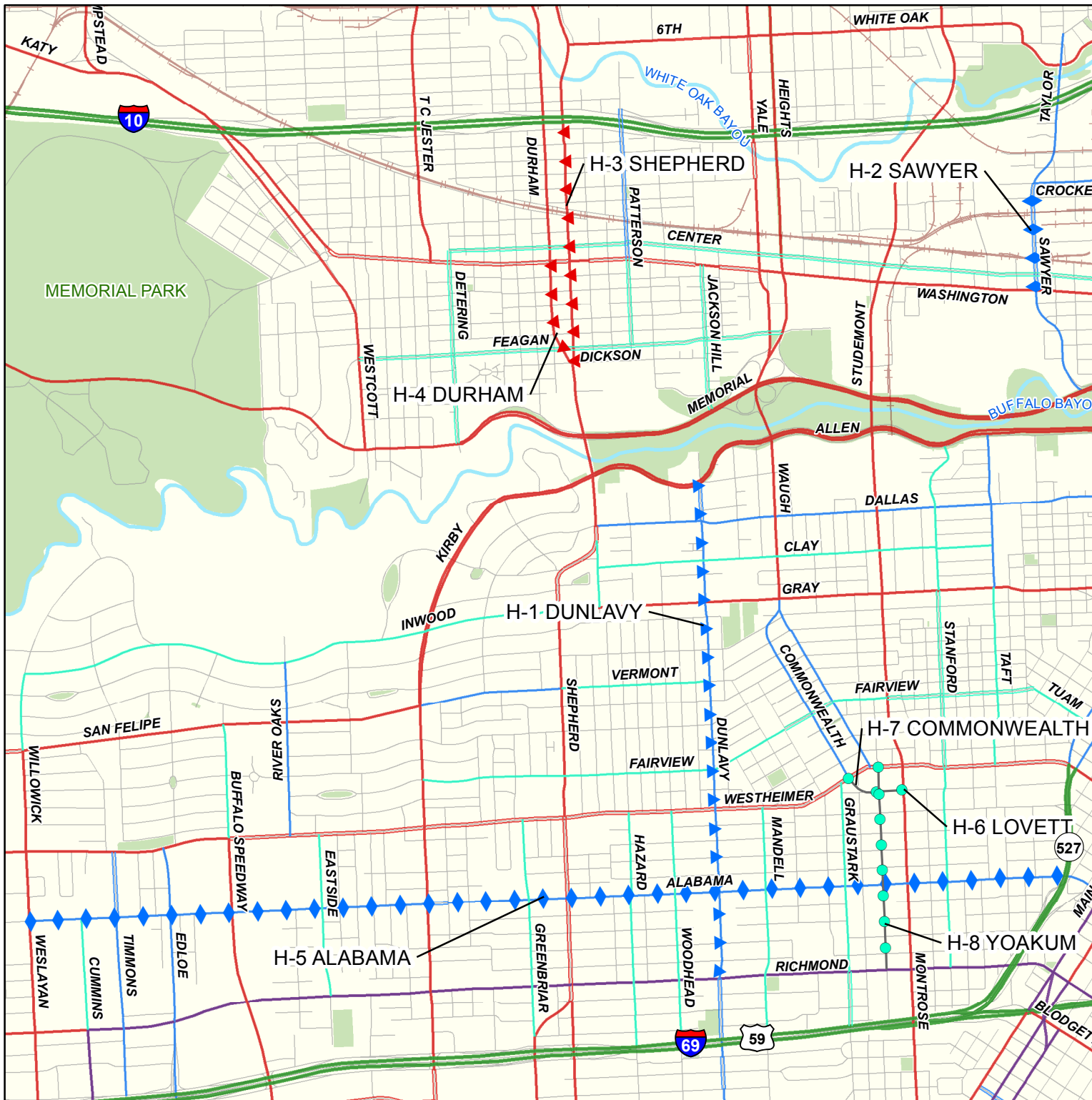
# PRELIMINARY REPORT

P&D is requesting to reclassify W. Alabama Street between Wesleyan Street and Spur 527 from a 4 lane Major Collector (MJ-4-60) to a 2 lane Major Collector (MJ-2-60).

H-6. Lovett Boulevard: P&D is requesting to add Lovett Boulevard between Montrose Boulevard and Commonwealth Street as a Minor Collector (MN-2-110). Commonwealth Street extends across Westheimer Road to align with Lovett Boulevard. The reclassification is consistent with the function of the roadway.

H-7. Commonwealth Street: P&D is requesting to add Commonwealth Street between Lovett Boulevard and Westheimer Road as a Minor Collector (MN-2-60). Commonwealth Street extends across Westheimer Road to align with Lovett Boulevard. The reclassification is consistent with the function of the roadway.

H-8. Yoakum Boulevard: P&D is requesting to add Yoakum Boulevard between Westheimer Road and Richmond Avenue as a Minor Collector (MN-2-90). Yoakum Boulevard extends into Waugh Drive north of Westheimer Road. The existing uses along this section of the roadway are predominantly institutional.



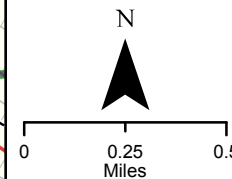
## 2015 Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan Amendment Request Inner West Loop: H-1 - H-8

### 2015 MTFP Amendment Requests

- Add —●—
- Realign —○—
- Remove —X—
- Reclassify {
- Street Class —■—
  - ROW Width —▲—
  - No. Lanes —◆—

### 2014 MTFP

- Freeway —■—
- Major Thoroughfare —■—
- Major Collector —■—
- Minor Collector —■—
- Transit Corridor Street —■—
- Local Street —■—
- Railroad —■—
- Houston City Limit —■—
- Houston ETJ —■—
- County Boundary —■—
- Park —■—
- Waterway —■—

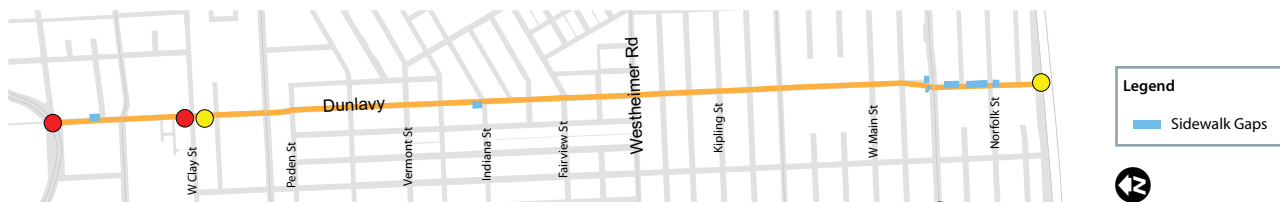


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# **PRELIMINARY REPORT APPENDIX**

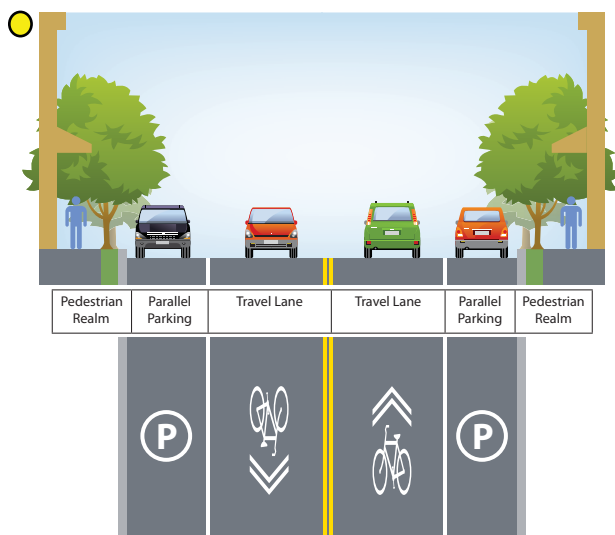
- **Mobility Study Project Sheets**
- **City Mobility Planning**

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## Existing Conditions

Dunlavy provides north/south access within a series of neighborhoods in the southeastern quadrant of the Study Area. The connections to several Major Thoroughfares make Dunlavy a logical Major Collector within the overall transportation network. Dunlavy has been identified as a corridor that will require additional Right-of-Way near the intersection with US-59 and the intersection with Allen Parkway.



## Key Factors

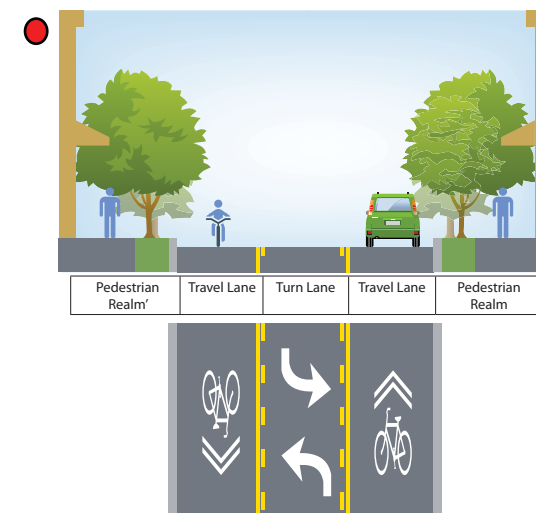


## Identified Needs

Given the more residential context along Dunlavy, there is a large existing network of on-street parking that provides transportation challenges near major intersections. In particular, the intersection near Westheimer has been identified as an area that will likely need further specific analysis of intersection treatments to minimize conflict points between turning traffic and parking/parked cars. A few small gaps in the sidewalk network exist along Dunlavy. Additionally, the lower speed nature of Dunlavy makes it an attractive Bike Route within this part of the Study Area, especially given the Right-of-Way constraints on the adjacent Major Thoroughfares. The combination of on-street parking and intersection treatments for turning movements can create some confusion for a cyclist, and a clearly defined space would be ideal for creating a bike-friendly environment.

## Future Vision

Providing a complete bicycle and pedestrian network along Dunlavy helps to provide an alternative route within the larger transportation network. Slower vehicular speeds, and lower carrying capacity are a byproduct of the corridor focus, however, local access is maintained. The connection of Dunlavy at Allen Parkway will also need additional examination of the best way to get cyclists and pedestrians into the Bayou Trail network. As a Major Collector, Dunlavy fits within the **Urban Street** designation within the Multi-Modal Street Classification System.





## Existing Conditions

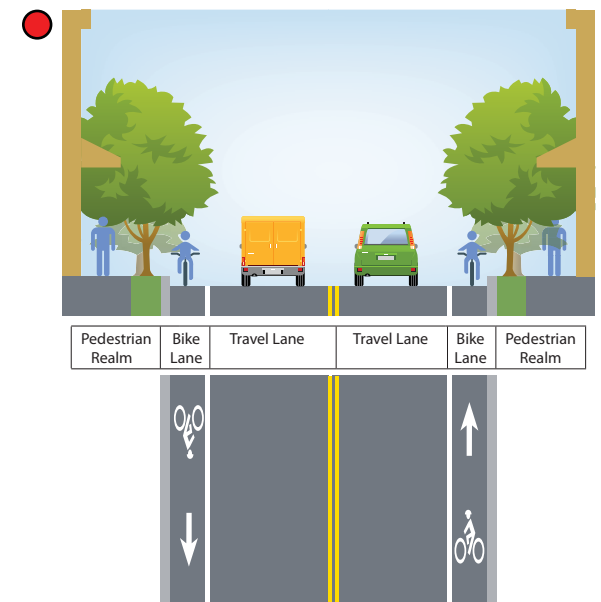
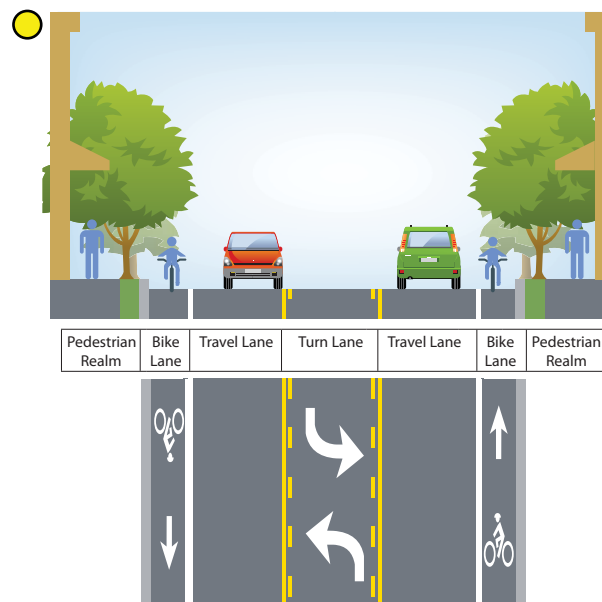
The Sawyer/Taylor corridor is currently designated as a **Major Collector**, with the segment between Washington and Crockett identified as an area that will need additional Right-of-Way. The corridor transitions quickly from commercial to industrial uses, and then as it approaches the Washington Corridor, the corridor again transitions to residential uses.

## Identified Needs

Several sidewalk gaps exist along the corridor, and there has been discussion of continuing the existing bicycle facility throughout the remainder of the corridor. As redevelopment occurs, there will be a need to widen the Right-of-Way to the designated 60' width to accommodate the planned cross section.

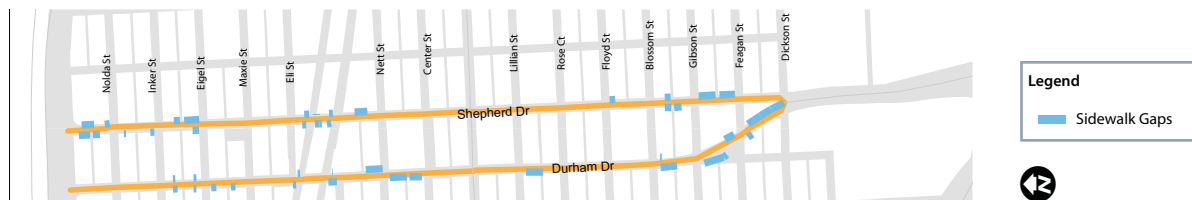
## Future Vision

Defining Sawyer/Taylor as an **Urban Street** will allow for the 60' Right-of-Way to promote the continuation of the bicycle and pedestrian facilities that are present in sections of the corridor, while still allowing the vehicle realm to manage the traffic demand. Continuing to provide connectivity to the local and regional networks will allow Sawyer/Taylor to meet the needs of the traveling public, while also addressing the needs for multi-modal transportation options within this sector of the Study Area.



## Key Factors





## Existing Conditions

Shepherd and Durham are constructed as a one-way pair north of Memorial. This configuration continues to well beyond the northern limits of the Study Area and a large portion of the traffic within the corridor is regional in nature. As such, the designation as a **Major Thoroughfare** is fitting. The one-way pair nature of this segment of these corridors also allows for additional consideration within the Infrastructure Design Manual pertaining to any on-street parking considerations and alternative cross section options. The current design allows for travel lanes in each direction during the peak hours, with certain areas allowing on-street parking during the off-peak hours for the local businesses. The current sidewalk network has many interruptions throughout the Shepherd corridor, while the Durham corridor seems to have better overall connectivity. Neither corridor currently provides dedicated areas for bicycles within the travelway.

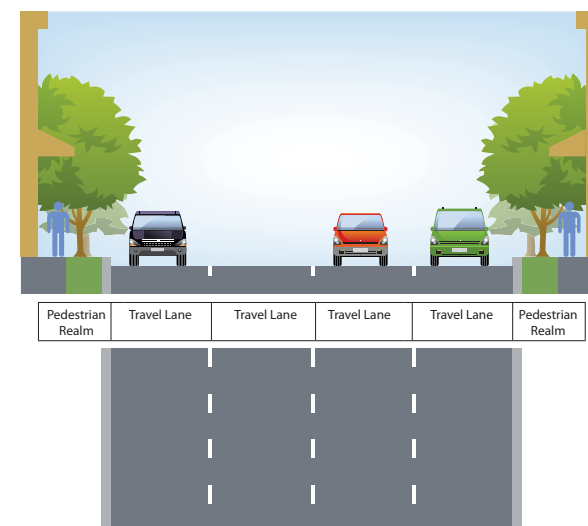
## Identified Needs

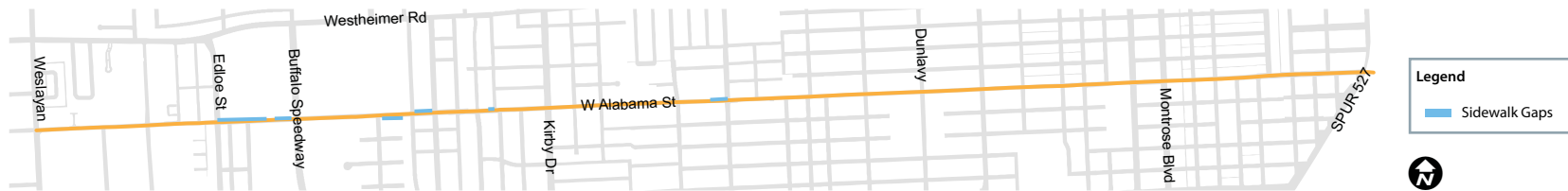
Comments received during the public outreach process suggested a need for improvements within the pedestrian realm, including completion of the entire sidewalk network. Additional improvements to bus stop areas within the corridor could help to facilitate increases in transit ridership within the corridor. The graphics on the following page highlight some alternative considerations for Shepherd and Durham. Gaps within the sidewalk network have been noted in blue. Of note within the Shepherd and Durham corridors is that several of the intersections at other Major Thoroughfares are experiencing significant congestion today, and that congestion is projected to grow in the future. The one-way nature helps to minimize some of the delays, however, traffic volumes are projected to grow to such levels that congestion at intersections during the AM and PM peak are unavoidable.

## Future Vision

The proposed Multi-Modal Street Classification for Shepherd and Durham within this section is an **Urban Couplet**. The corridor is envisioned to serve a regional transportation needs while providing local access to businesses and the surrounding neighborhood. Construction of an improved corridor that includes completing/improving the pedestrian realm and provisions for **High Frequency Transit** is essential to meeting the overall needs of the Multi-Modal network within the Study Area. Finally, as redevelopment of smaller parcels occurs, the consolidation of some driveways with a focus on creating logical connections to the local street network would help traffic flow along the corridor.

## Key Factors





## Existing Conditions

West Alabama currently is constructed as a 3-Lane travelway with sidewalks. The adjacent development orientation shifts from direct access onto the pedestrian realm to larger surface parking lots abutting the street. West Alabama includes an imbalanced lane cross section that allows 2 travel lanes in one direction and 1 travel lane in the opposing direction. West Alabama connects a residential neighborhood near the western edge of the study area, to the downtown grid in a consistent corridor. The travel speeds and volume tends to be less than either of the parallel routes, Westheimer and Richmond, and the overall context stays much more consistent throughout the length of the corridor. West Alabama is currently classified as a **Major Collector** that is in need of additional Right-of-Way between Buffalo Speedway and Shepherd.

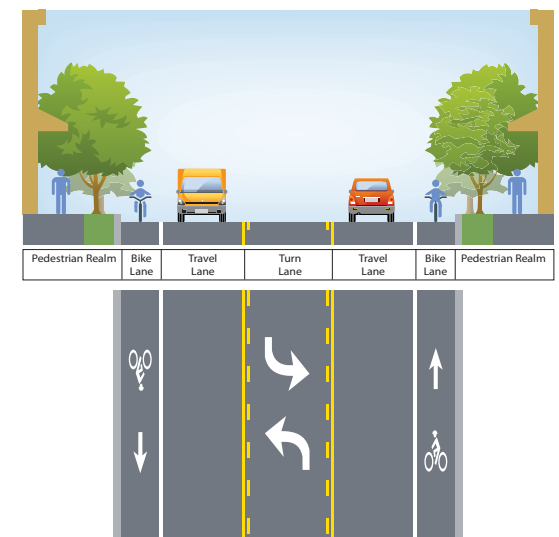
## Identified Needs

Comments received during the public outreach process suggested several topics for examination along West Alabama. Residents, business owners, and representatives from various governing agencies suggested that West Alabama could be improved through the implementation of bicycle lanes and creating a uniform cross section that allowed for a conversion to a standardized lane configuration. The corridor could also benefit from an improved pedestrian realm and completing the sidewalks where gaps currently exist. The graphics highlight some alternative considerations for West Alabama. Gaps within the sidewalk network have been noted in blue.

## Future Vision

The proposed Multi-Modal Street Classification for West Alabama is an **Urban Avenue**. The corridor is envisioned to serve a local transportation need with less emphasis on through traffic. Construction on an improved corridor that includes facilities for bicycles and completing/improving the pedestrian realm is essential to meeting the overall needs of the Multi-Modal Network within the study area. As redevelopment of smaller parcels occurs, the consolidation of some driveways would help traffic flow along the corridor. In addition, the creation of dedicated turn lanes will be very beneficial to the operation of the intersections.

## Key Factors



Possible short-term vision

## APPENDIX

### City Mobility Planning

In 2009, the City of Houston adopted the City Mobility Plan (CMP), which proposed a new process for developing mobility solutions. These solutions focus on capitalizing on current transportation infrastructure by emphasizing multi-modal mobility options and system improvements with a higher than average benefit-cost ratio. Historically, we have addressed increased traffic by simply expanding our streets or network capacity. This methodology simply isn't sustainable given limited funding sources, quality of life factors, and constraints on land development.

With expected growth in the study areas, several of the corridors will continue to see increased congestion within the next 25 years, and the limited rights-of-way will preclude several corridors from increasing their through-put capacity by simply widening the street. As such, the City of Houston is taking a holistic approach to defining a vision for these corridors. All modes of travel will need to be accommodated in some form or fashion within each of the study areas. By using the concepts defined within the *Infrastructure Design Manual, Chapter 10, Appendix 2*, the City is taking its first step in trying to create a multi-modal vision for the corridors within the study areas. Resulting recommendations are evidence of a balanced approach that took many City resources into consideration, including: Existing Conditions Analysis, Public Engagement, Stakeholder Engagement/Oversight, and modeling scenarios which specifically targeted attempts in vehicular congestion evaluation and network solutions.



Based on expected growth, limited room to build new or expand existing roads, increase in projected congestion, and a desire for the City to find a more multi-modal oriented solution to the City's ever-pressing traffic concerns, the following recommendations were made. Local street recommendations were provided to preserve and tighten the existing grid to eliminate the possibility of future roadway abandonment or alteration of local streets, allowing for the continued preservation of the corridors while enhancing the importance of alternative modes of transportation, such as bikes.

For more information about City Mobility Planning, visit the City of Houston's Mobility page at <http://houstontx.gov/planning/mobility/cmp>.

### Other Planning Studies

In addition to City Mobility Planning efforts, the City of Houston makes annual amendments to their Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan, supports the development of the City's Transportation Policy and Regulations, provides technical support to the City's Transportation Advisory Committee and maintains the City's Travel Demand Model. To find more studies that the City of Houston has been involved in, visit their Mobility webpage at <http://houstontx.gov/planning/mobility/>.

The City of Houston also coordinates with the Houston-Galveston Area Council and other transportation agencies within the region and pursues federal funding opportunities for transportation planning studies and public-private partnerships. To review transportation and other planning studies (related to business and economic development, community, emergency/disaster planning, environment, mobility, and public safety), visit the Houston-Galveston Area Council's webpage at <http://www.h-gac.com/home/residents.aspx>.